

<b>SEStran Regional Bus Strategy</b>	
<b>Document</b>	<b>Equality Impact Assessment - Impact Assessment – Scoping Report</b>
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## Public Sector Equality Duty Impact Assessment – Scoping Report

### 1 Public Sector Equality Duty

#### 1.1 Introduction

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out a ‘Public Sector Equality Duty’ (PSED). This requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without. The duty covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The public sector equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships, with regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination in employment.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 require listed authorities to undertake an impact assessment in relation to the needs outlined in section 149(1) of the Act and take account of the results of the assessment in development of the policy. The approach to the assessment has been informed by reference to the Scottish Government’s general guidance on the PSED (Scottish Government, 2016) and relevant guidance on application of the duty in Scotland (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2016).

This Scoping Report sets out the background to the SEStran Regional Bus Strategy study and presents the evidence base and Public Sector Equality Impact Assessment process to be undertaken at an interim impact assessment stage during the options appraisal stage of the study.

### 2 SEStran Regional Bus Strategy

#### 2.1 Study Background

The development of a SEStran Regional Bus Strategy has its foundations embedded in the SEStran Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) (2021 – 2035), and its vision, priorities and objectives, and clear policy statement setting out the aim for a world class passenger focused public transport system.

The 2035 SEStran RTS was published in 2023 and reinforces national policy ambitions, setting out the following Vision for transport in the region:

*A South-East of Scotland, fully integrated to reflect new national, regional and local policy priorities. It sets out the type of region we want the South-East of Scotland to be and how transport can contribute to achieving that for everyone. The vision also shapes the strategy objectives by providing a high-level context and long-term focus for the strategy.*

The RTS signals the need for transformational change in transport and travel behaviour. The strategy recognises the transport challenges around active travel, public transport, mixed modes, freight, and car use. The challenges addressed those from a user perspective, which cover issues such as travel costs, the lack of public transport connectivity and services, confusing travel information, safety, accessibility, and reliability.

The RTS concluded that the **strategy Vision will not be achieved without improving the quality and integration of the bus network and set out a policy aiming for a world class passenger focused public transport system**. Given this conclusion, the need for the development of a SEStran Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) was recognised with the new powers and opportunities available through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

The development of the world class system is guided by the RTS ‘Transforming and extending the bus service’ mobility theme which focuses on the spatial context for the RTS and future RTS Delivery Plans, setting out the

strategic gateways, corridors and locations that will be a focus for future transport appraisal and investment to support regional development priorities and economic strategies.

In seeking to deliver its vision, the RTS sets out four strategic objectives to anchor the strategy within the wider societal goals transport needs to help:

- Transition to a sustainable, post-carbon transport system
- Facilitate healthier travel options
- Transform public transport connectivity and access across the region
- Support safe, sustainable and efficient movement of people and freight across the region

From these priorities, four transport objectives were set covering the transport system in terms of sustainability, healthier travel options, connectivity, and safety and efficiency.

The RTS sets out a range of policies and actions that will shape investment in transport for the next 10 to 15 years. This aims to ensure the climate emergency is addressed by meeting the Scottish Government's target to reduce car traffic levels by 20% by 2030. This will need investment in active travel and public transport so these become attractive modal choices and achieve a key theme within the strategy of *reducing car km and car mode share*.

The SEStran Regional Bus Strategy is being developed through the consideration of:

- the role of bus in delivery of the RTS;
- the spatial context of the bus network; and
- the attributes and components of a world class bus network for the region.

The option development and appraisal process will consider the operating and funding model (from the range of bus reform options available to SEStran) and during the option appraisal process will be informed by this Equality Impact Assessment. The appraisal will identify the most appropriate operating and funding model(s) for the region, taking into account the powers available through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

## 3 Evidence base

### 3.1 Overview

Different people use the bus network at different times, more or less frequently, and for different purposes. People with protected characteristics are more likely to use and rely on public transport, particularly bus services therefore a lack of public transport services and options disproportionately impacts on disabled people, women and younger and older people in particular. Some groups of people, such as people from ethnic minority groups, disabled people, young carers, young mothers, and care leavers, are typically less mobile and more reliant on public transport (Scottish Government, 2017). This may result in differential impacts of changes to service provision for a particular time of day or route for people in different groups of protected characteristics. Policies or measures around service provision, information, price and scheduling in the emerging SRBS are therefore likely to impact groups related to protected characteristics in different ways.

It is also important to acknowledge the links between socio-economic disadvantage (which is expressly considered as part of the Fairer Scotland Duty<sup>1</sup>) and many of the groups with protected characteristics. Women, people with disabilities and people in some ethnic groups are more likely to have lower incomes or

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<sup>1</sup> See separate Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Report

live in areas of deprivation therefore they are typically also affected by issues around affordability of transport, and dependency on public transport to access employment, health facilities and other services.

The Scottish Household Survey collects data on the perceptions of users of public transport including safety and security on buses and train services. It should be noted that this represents the whole of Scotland and not just the SEStran region. Nonetheless it provides an indication of perceptions of safety and security. The vast majority of bus and train users feel safe on them during the day with 95% of train users and 93% of bus users providing a positive response. However, the situation changes in the evening with only 76% of train users and 68% of bus users stating that they feel safe and secure. This highlights that between a quarter and a third of public transport users do not feel safe and secure in the evening and that buses are perceived as being less safe than trains. These problems are particularly acute for the most vulnerable groups including the young, elderly, disabled, women and ethnic minorities.

Impacts are likely to be compounded in rural areas where current levels of public transport provision and connectivity can act as barriers giving rise to a range of socio-economic impacts and equalities issues. Retention of bus services is essential in rural areas as a lifeline service for many people who do not have any alternative transport options. Bus services in rural communities are also experiencing a sharp decline in use, heightened by the impacts of COVID-19. Key factors influencing whether to travel by bus identified from the SEStran RTS public 2021 survey related to mode interchange, journey times and frequency of services being reported as the most important reasons as to why public transport may or may not be used more frequently (Stantec UK, 2021). These are particular challenges in the wake of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on declining public transport use particularly in rural areas where bus service provision is a complex balance between commercial and supported services.

The impact of school bus services in rural Scotland has been significant, especially considering the unique challenges that rural areas face. School bus services are crucial in rural Scotland for connecting young people to education. They provide a vital link for students who might otherwise be unable to travel to school due to the long distances and lack of alternative transport options. Despite their importance, rural school bus services face challenges such as funding, maintaining service levels, and dealing with the impacts of remote geography. The lower population density in rural areas can make routes less commercially viable, leading to a reliance on subsidies and support from local authorities (Transport Scotland, 2023).

The Scottish Government has recognized these challenges and has taken steps to support rural bus services. For example, the Community Bus Fund aims to improve local public transport in rural deprived areas by supporting local authorities with funding and resources to explore innovative transport solutions (Transport Scotland, 2023).

Analysis undertaken as part of the Case for Change for the SEStran Regional Bus Strategy highlights that 4% of households across the South East region do not have access to a bus stop (within a suitable walking catchment defined (for this analysis) as within 400m in large urban and urban areas, within 600m with accessible small towns and rural small towns, and within 800m in accessible rural areas and remote rural areas); 13% of households (defined as having access to a bus stop) have a bus less often than every 30 minutes, with this rising to 20% for stops located outside of Edinburgh; 48% of households outside of Edinburgh have no direct bus to Edinburgh on a weekday, nearly one in ten households (8%) have no access to a service after 19:00 (rising to 11% outside of Edinburgh); and 9% of households are not served by a Sunday service. This limits the use of the bus network by many including for employment, education, leisure and social activities, especially in more rural areas.

Review of key information sources and recent literature has suggested several trends and issues relating to a number of the protected characteristics which should be considered in the EqIA process. These are highlighted below.

### 3.2 Age

The increase in the population of older age groups has been much higher than younger age groups over the last 20 years (National Records of Scotland, 2020). Elderly people tend to travel relatively less often and for shorter distances than other adults (Fatima, Moridpour, De Gruyter, & Saghapour, 2020) although they are more likely to use public transport for journeys in comparison with other age groups. They are also less likely to drive every day or hold a driving licence. For those older people who are no longer working, many are more likely to travel between the hours of 9:00 and 15:00, with most trips for shopping (mostly undertaken by older women) (Su & Bell, 2012). Accessibility issues are more likely to affect older people than other age groups with some older people having more limited mobility, hearing or vision impairments and difficulties in alighting to and from transport services, using station facilities or standing for long periods of time (Jacobs and AECOM, 2022). Older people experiencing difficulties of access to public transport may be hampered in accessing key services such as healthcare.

Younger and older people are less likely to drive and more likely to use the bus than those in other age groups, with data from Transport Scotland showing in 2019 that the 16-19 age group had the highest percentage of adults (57%) that used the bus at least once a month. The group with the second highest proportion were the 60-69 age group with 48% using the bus at least once a month. Issues facing older people in accessing public transport include inaccessible vehicles, journey comfort, frequency of bus services and poor integration between different transport services (National Transport Strategy, 2020). Older people also face real and perceived problems with safety and security and accessibility of walking routes, bus stops, travel information, vehicles and services. They are less likely to find public transport safe and secure in the evening compared to young adults.

In the last 15 years, the youngest adults (16-24 year olds) have been consistently more likely to be in relative poverty compared to older adults (Scottish Government, 2023). According to Davis (2014), younger people may have a more local focus than the population as a whole. This suggests that younger people from deprived areas may look for jobs and training opportunities only in their local area and those easily accessible via public transport.

Disabled people and older people with mobility needs have found the significant reduction in public transport services following COVID-19 to be particularly difficult to deal with. These groups often do not have access to reliable and accurate information when trying to make travel plans. They can also be excluded from accessing information provided in digital formats due to a lack of access to, or the skills and confidence to use (and/or afford) digital technology.

Equalities issues relevant to children and young people who form part of this protected characteristic group are addressed in more detail in the evidence base presented in support of the CRW duty assessment report.<sup>2</sup>

### 3.3 Disability

Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework (SATF) supports implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability in Scotland and is a key framework for the RTS. In SEStran region, one fifth of the adult population has a limiting long term physical or mental health problem (Stantec UK, 2021). Yet SEStran identify that there is a lack of integrated and comprehensive accessible journey planning information essential to disabled people being able to plan a whole journey, and a lack of consistent provision of audio/visual travel information on board transport services. For example, NHS websites tend to signpost to Traveline Scotland or Google maps, neither of which can specifically identify accessible transport options needed for planning a journey. These websites also have poor accessibility features for people with visual impairments (MACS, 2019).

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<sup>2</sup> See separate CRW Assessment Report

Disabled people are less likely to possess a driving licence than those who are not disabled (51% compared to 75%) (Transport Scotland, 2021b). Those who are disabled and have a driving licence are less likely to drive everyday than those who are not disabled (25% compared to 47%). Permanently sick or disabled adults in Scotland are significantly more likely to travel by bus (19% travelling 2 or 3 times per week compared to 9% of all adults in 2019) and they are less likely to travel by train compared to all adults (Transport Scotland, 2019b). These groups often experience higher levels of inequality and accessible transport is an important aspect of helping disabled people enjoy a better quality of life.

Poverty rates remain higher for households in which somebody is disabled compared to those where no-one is disabled (Scottish Government, 2023). People who have a long-term illness or disability that limits their daily activities are more likely to live in households that do not have access to a private car. About one in every two individuals whose daily activities are limited a lot by long-term health problems or disability live in a household without access to a private car, compared with just one in five people whose daily activities are not limited by health problems or disability (National Records of Scotland, 2011).

An individual will generally use public transport less frequently if they experience a greater number of difficulties completing daily tasks or where lack of accessible infrastructure and services presents a barrier (Yarde, Clery, Tipping, & Kiss, 2020). This may include:

- a lack of cycle infrastructure for adapted bicycles and costs associated with non-standard cycles; and
- safety and security concerns when using public transport, especially at night. 58% of disabled people agreed that they 'Feel safe and secure on the bus at night' compared to 73% of non-disabled people (Transport Scotland, 2021b).

SEStran have identified that the transport system has a significant impact on disabled people and that it can exacerbate disability inequality. The Regional Transport Strategy highlights that the regions transport network must be physically accessible through step free access to help with boarding and alighting for those with disabilities or mobility impairments. Also, easy access to information must be provided for all users, especially for those who require it in the form of braille, large print, and audio for those with sight difficulties. Some of the key issues in the South East of Scotland are identified as:

- Physical access to, and use of the public transport network is a problem for users with disabilities: those who are most dependent on public transport to access essential services can also find the greatest barriers when using it.
- Vulnerable groups such as those with disabilities do not feel safe on public transport: This can discourage them from using it, especially in the evenings.
- People do not have full awareness of their public transport options: This will impact those with learning difficulties or those with sight or hearing impairments the most as it will make journeys more challenging causing them to be discourage from using the transport network.
- People are sometimes unable to get a seat on public transport services: This will particularly affect those who have mobility issues and can make travel by public transport unattractive.

People with disabilities tend to avoid travelling during peak hours. On weekdays a greater proportion of disabled people's journeys are in the middle of the day, and fewer before 9:30am and after 4:30pm. For those whose disability limits activities a lot, there is an even greater proportion of travel between 9:30 and 4:30 (Transport Scotland, 2021b).

A lack of accessible travel information including timetables, journey planning information and audio / visual announcements can create barriers for those with sight or hearing impairments, cognitive impairments, mental health conditions or neuro-diverse conditions (Jarvis, 2020). However, travel behaviour among groups of people with disabilities varies widely as the behaviour of people with specific types of disabilities is often markedly different to each other (Clery, Kiss, Taylor, & Gill, 2017). Whilst most disabled travellers in Scotland rely on public transport, many experience difficulties when travelling. Problems include poor service frequency, inadequate infrastructure between home and stop or station, lack of suitable facilities while travelling (e.g. toilets) and difficulties physically accessing the transport (Disability Equality Scotland, 2017). Other access difficulties encountered by disabled travellers include steps or multi-layered stations, lack of trained support staff and lack of accessible connectivity between modes (Jacobs and AECOM, 2022).

Women and disabled people may also face safety issues when using public transport, particularly where bus stops are situated in isolated or unsafe places (Duchene, 2011). A 2018 survey (Disability Equality Scotland, 2018) found that access to hospitals by transport for disabled people was most difficult in rural areas, evidencing a clear link between lack of transport and an ability for people to achieve the highest standard of physical and mental health. In rural and island areas, journey times by public transport are often long and may involve at least one interchange. This can exacerbate problems of access to health and other key services and facilities for non-car users and impact upon health outcomes and contributing to higher NHS costs.

### **3.4 Gender reassignment**

Transgender people typically experience hate crimes more regularly than other groups and fear of harassment can prevent them from accessing public transport and other services (Scottish Trans Alliance, 2016). Transgender people are likely to have lower incomes and experience structural disadvantages in accessing employment and training and therefore they are at a higher risk of transport poverty. They may have concerns about using public transport or public transport facilities, such as toilets, for fear of being harassed or discriminated against (Valentine, 2016) which could affect their use of the public transport network. Limited information and data are available on the transgender population including the lived experiences of this group with regards to transport (Transport Scotland, 2021).

### **3.5 Pregnancy and maternity**

Mothers often have complex journey patterns e.g. making journeys between home, work, nursery, the school run and groups/clubs. Pregnant women and people travelling on public transport with pushchairs and children may experience difficulties in accessing and using services associated with accessing vehicles/infrastructure and also difficulties on-board vehicles due to restrictions in their mobility levels. Pregnant women may also have safety concerns about travelling at night or during isolated times of day. They may also find it difficult to travel safely during peak hours (Transport Scotland, 2021).

### **3.6 Race**

Data at a Scotland-level is limited on different ethnic minority groups (Scottish Government, 2015) and any analysis of race-based discrimination must consider the differences in people's experiences and preferences both between and within different ethnic groups (Gentin, 2011).

The last Census (2011) found that most of the population in Scotland was white. Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British was the second largest ethnicity in Scotland (2.7%), with the largest populations being in Glasgow (8.1%), Edinburgh (5.5%) and East Renfrewshire (5.1%). Most of the population in the SEStran region identify as 'White' but there are variations across the region with 91.8% of people in the City of Edinburgh having the lowest proportion of people identifying in this way, compared to 98.4% in Clackmannanshire and 98.7% in the Scottish Borders. The local authorities in SEStran region also differ with the proportion of people who identify as 'Asian, Asian Scottish, or Asian British', with the Scottish borders having the lowest (0.6%) whereas the City



of Edinburgh has the highest with 5.5%, which is significantly more than the SEStran average of 1.7% (Scotland's Census, 2011).

Certain ethnic minority households were most likely to have no car or van available (compared to the national average of 23%) including 51% of African households, 39% of Caribbean or Black households and 36% of Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British households (Transport Scotland, 2019).

Recent research suggests that people from black and ethnic minority groups take relatively few active leisure trips such as walking or cycling (Colley & Irvine, 2018). Potential explanations can include socio-economic disadvantage, fear of discrimination, and language barriers. (Transport Scotland, 2020).

Some ethnic minority groups are more likely to be subject to hate crimes and discrimination and this could create barriers to using public transport services and facilities for these groups (Transport Scotland, 2021). Those from black and other minority ethnic groups were more likely to indicate that they had experienced bullying or discrimination compared to those from white ethnic groups (25% and 17% respectively) (Transport Scotland, 2022). Black and minority ethnic people therefore may have more limited travel choices due to past experiences and problems with personal safety and security.

People from ethnic minority groups are more likely to be in relative poverty after housing costs compared to those from the 'White - British' and 'White - Other' groups (Scottish Government, 2023). As noted, people in ethnic minority groups are less likely to have access to a car, are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, and rely on public transport more than other groups and are potentially more vulnerable to disadvantage where transport services are changed, reduced, or become more expensive. Issues of transport cost and safety may therefore disproportionately affect these groups and affect their health and socio-economic outcomes.

### **3.7 Religion or belief**

There is a limited evidence base detailing how this protected characteristic relates to inequalities on the transport system. Discrimination, assault or harassment (or fear of these) on the basis of religious identity may affect people of certain religious groups more than others, and this may affect their choice to use public transport and public transport facilities.

### **3.8 Sex**

Women and disabled people are less likely to drive and more likely to use buses, yet they have particular needs that are often not taken into account by transport systems which tend to be designed around the needs of some travellers and not others (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Women are much more likely to be the head of single parent households, which have lower rates of personal car ownership than two parent households. In Scotland, the households that were least likely to have access to a car were single adult households (59%), in comparison to 92% of married or cohabiting families with children having access to a car (Transport Scotland, 2022).

In general, women engage in travel linked to caring responsibilities and domestic commitments and are more likely to travel with young people and older people (Duchene, 2011) (Sanchez de Madariaga, 2013) and make multi-purpose trips. This influences travel behaviour and women tend to travel shorter distances within a more restricted geographical area, make more multi-stop trips, and rely more on public transport. Women are also more likely to be the victim of, and have concerns about, sexual assault or harassment on public transport, particularly at night.

SEStran report a range of other key evidence relating to women and transport:

- Women are more likely to travel with young people and the elderly
- Women will more likely travel shorter distances within a more restricted geographical area, and rely more on public transport
- Women are more likely to make multi-stop journeys than women who work full-time or than men, whatever their working status
- Women feel less safe on public transport and are more likely to use a car or taxi
- Women aged 17-30 have the lowest proportion with a driving license
- Safety and feelings of safety have a significant impact on women's travel choices. In the UK, 72% of women were worried about experiencing sexual harassment on public transport, compared to 40% of men. This has led to a higher proportion of women (62% compared to 35% of men) who would change their behaviour to in relation to public transport to avoid sexual harassment (UK Government Equalities Office, 2020); and
- Women feel less safe than men when travelling at night. Survey data from 2022 shows that females and those who identified as either trans, non-binary or in another way were less likely to indicate that they felt safe using the bus at night either always or often, and were more likely to state that they never felt safe using the bus at night compared to males (Transport Scotland 2022).

### 3.9 Sexual orientation

A greater proportion of the LGBT group lived in the most deprived quintile (27 per cent compared with 19 per cent of heterosexual adults (Scottish Government, 2017b). People in the LGBT group may be concerned about being able to access public transport and public transport facilities, especially at night when these may be poorly lit, for fear of harassment or discrimination (Transport Scotland, 2021). In the UK, of those who had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, 28% had experienced this on public transport (UK Government Equalities Office, 2020).

Disabled people, older and vulnerable people, people from ethnic minorities, women and LGBT people do not always feel safe using public transport and experience difficulty accessing information (SEStran, 2023). A survey in 2017 (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2017) identified there has been a decline in the percentage of LGBT young people overall who say they feel safe on public transport, from 70% in 2012 to 67% in 2017. Overall, 51% of transgender young people in the survey felt safe when using public transportation. A more recent survey shows that those (aged 16+) who identified their sexual orientation as either gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or in another way were considerably more likely to indicate that they had experienced bullying or discrimination while travelling on buses – 43% compared to 18% of those who identified as straight/heterosexual (Transport Scotland, 2022).

Limited information and data are available on the lived experiences of this group with regards to transport.

### 3.10 Marriage and civil partnership

No evidence has been identified on travel in relation to marriage or civil partnership.

## 4 Proposed Assessment Framework

### 4.1 Introduction

The following guide framing questions and assessment criteria matrix will be applied to testing the performance of the emerging SEStran Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) options in relation to implementing the PSED. This provides a transparent framework to assess the extent to which emerging SRBS components promote equality of opportunity, including the removal of physical and cultural barriers to accessing and benefiting from the transport system.

The assessment will be informed through engagement activities with relevant groups of interest and impact (as discussed below).

### 4.2 Guide Questions

The framing questions, as set out below, have been designed to allow for testing the implementation of the PSED.

The framing questions have been applied in relation to the three key aims of the Duty:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advancing equality of opportunity; and
- Fostering good relations.

The second of these aims involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages affecting people due to their protected characteristics;
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

#### **Guide Questions: Public Sector Equality Duty**

**How might the SRBS affect each protected group, both positively and negatively?**

**How might the SRBS support SEStran to fulfil the General Duty, specifically:**

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct,**
- **Advance equality of opportunity, and**
- **Foster good relations?**

### 4.3 Assessment Criteria Matrix

The following matrix will be used to assess any disproportionate impact of the emerging SRBS on protected characteristics. The assessment criteria provide an objective means of undertaking and reporting the equalities assessments of the transport policies on a consistent basis. The colour coding also allows for rapid identification of the impacts most likely to be significant, generally those assessed as having a major positive or negative effect.

Impact Score	Description	Symbol
Major Beneficial Effect	The policy contributes significantly to the requirements of the PSED, particularly to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	++
Minor Beneficial Effect	The policy contributes to the requirements of the PSED, particularly to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics, economic and social issues, but not significantly	+
Neutral / Negligible Effect	The policy has no clear relationship with the requirements of the PSED or the relationship is negligible	0
Minor Adverse Effect	The policy adversely affects the requirements of the PSED particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	-
Major Adverse Effect	The policy significantly adversely affects the requirements of the PSED particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	--
Uncertain Effect	The policy has an uncertain relationship to the PSED requirements or insufficient detail or information may be available to enable an assessment to be made.	?
No Clear Relationship	There is no clear relationship between the proposed policy and the achievement of the PSED	~

## 5 Next Steps

This scoping document has set out the core evidence base with regards to the duties of public bodies under the PSED to inform the assessment of options being developed and appraised to inform the SEStran Regional Bus Strategy.

**This scoping document is to be shared with each Local Authority and disabled people's advocacy groups (such as Disability Equality Scotland)** within the South East Scotland area, to gather any feedback on the scoping documents and /or additional evidence base information.

During the appraisal of options for the strategy, an **interim assessment** is to be undertaken on the options being developed and appraised toward the development of the SEStran Regional Bus Strategy. This assessment will support the options appraisal process. A final assessment would also be undertaken as the Strategy itself is developed.

The interim assessment will be undertaken using the Guide questions and assessment criteria matrix as set out above, and informed through an engagement exercise, as discussed below. The outcome of the assessment and engagement will be clearly stated in the appraisal outcomes, with options adapted if required, given the assessment findings.

### 5.1 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

As part of a wider consultation exercise planned for the options appraisal and SRBS development process, engagement would include a range of key stakeholders pertinent to the duty as well as more generally through the planned public engagement exercise.

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